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Evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report examines the relevance and effectiveness of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with a particular focus on its functional areas of consensus building, research and analysis, and technical assistance, to assess how they have influenced decision-making and policymaking.

ECLAC is tasked with responding to the economic, social and environmental challenges of a region with great diversity. The region includes high-income and least developed countries and small island and landlocked States. In the decade leading up to the global financial and economic crises in 2009, the region experienced relatively strong economic growth, including steady and significant declines in poverty and unemployment. Overall, however, Latin America and the Caribbean remains the region of the world with the highest level of inequality.

Against this backdrop, ECLAC has raised important and relevant development policy issues for debate among member States while maintaining its neutrality and facilitating regional and subregional integration initiatives. Its relevance and visibility are higher in Latin America compared with the Caribbean.

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ECLAC has facilitated regional and subregional decision-making in some critical areas. Through its research and analysis, it has increased an overall understanding of the various issues affecting the region; however, the knowledge produced is not as effectively disseminated as it could be. It has supported the strengthening and harmonization of statistics in the region but has been less effective in building capacities in the Caribbean. ECLAC has been influential at the regional and national levels in a number of thematic areas, but it can better leverage its catalytic role and promote South-South cooperation.

At the same time, the increasing complexity of development issues faced by the region, together with the growing number of mandates, puts enormous pressure on the organizational structure and resources of ECLAC.

OIOS makes six important recommendations: review of strategies in support of the ECLAC mandate; development of a country-by-country engagement strategy; formalization of mechanisms to incorporate Caribbean priorities into divisional work programmes; development of outreach strategies; strengthening of monitoring mechanisms; and strengthening of evaluation functions and practices.

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I. Introduction

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted a programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of a risk assessment undertaken early in 2013. The Committee for Programme and Coordination selected the evaluation for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, in 2015. The General Assembly approved the selection in its resolution 68/20.

2. The general frame of reference for OIOS is provided in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).[1] The evaluation has been conducted in conformity with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

II. Background

A. Mandate, governance, organizational structure, resources and core functions

Mandate

3. The Economic Commission for Latin America was created by Economic and Social Council resolution 106 (VI) in 1948. Subsequently, by resolution 1984/67, the Council renamed it the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The overall purpose of the programme is to promote economic, social and environmentally sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean through international cooperation, by undertaking comprehensive analyses of development processes and providing relevant normative, operational and technical cooperation services to member States in support of regional development efforts.

4. The objectives of the programme are to:

(a) Foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels;

(b) Promote the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) Support sustainable development by helping to bridge economic, social and environmental gaps between its member countries and subregions.

Governance

5. The Commission is composed of 44 members: the 33 countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region and 13 non-independent territories, which are associate members. Member States exercise governance through their participation in the biennial sessions of the Commission.

6. The Commission's subsidiary bodies are:

(a) Committee of the Whole;

[1] Regulation 7.1.

(b) Statistical Conference of the Americas;

(c) Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(d) Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee;

(e) Central American Economic Cooperation Committee;

(f) Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning;

(g) Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(h) Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies;

(i) Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(j) Committee on South-South Cooperation.

Management, organizational structure and resources

7. ECLAC operates under the leadership of an Executive Secretary at the Under-Secretary-General level, who is assisted by a Deputy Executive Secretary and a Director of Management, both at the D-2 level. The Deputy Executive Secretary is responsible for the substantive coordination of the national and liaison offices, as well as oversight of the Library, the Publications and Web Services Division and the Public Information Unit. The new Director of Management will oversee programme management and administration. The Programme Planning and Operations Division provides overall coordination, guidance and advice with respect to, among others, the formulation of the biennial programme plan and priorities.

8. ECLAC has two subregional headquarters, located in Mexico City, for Central America (including Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico); and Port of Spain, for the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. It has four national offices in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay and a liaison office located in Washington, D.C.

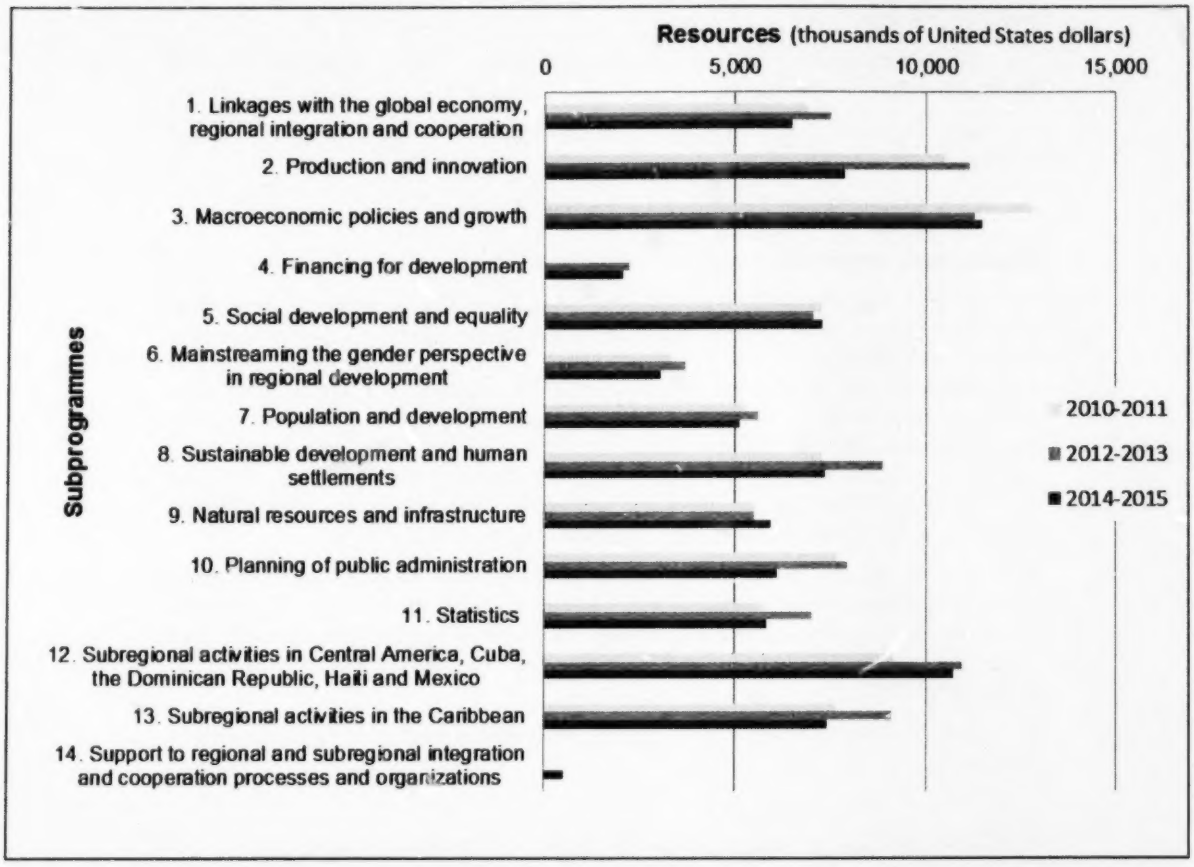
9. ECLAC overall budgets for the three most recent bienniums are reflected in table 1.

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015

	Resources (thousands of United States dollars)			*Posts*		
	2010-2011	*2012-2013*	*2014-2015 (before recosting)*	*2010-2011*	*2012-2013*	*2014-2015*
Regular budget	110 129.9	123 310.6	115 938.8	494	496	488
Extrabudgetary	29 500.0	32 096.6	31 507.0	40	42	42
Total	**139 629.9**	**155 407.1**	**147 445.8**	**536**	**538**	**530**

10. The ECLAC programme of work is delivered through 14 subprogrammes that are grouped into five thematic clusters. Figure I presents the ECLAC programme structure and regular budget resource requirements by subprogramme for the three most recent bienniums. For 2014-2015, the 14 subprogrammes have a total of 30 expected accomplishments and 55 indicators of achievement, an average of approximately 2 expected accomplishments and 4 indicators per subprogramme.

Figure I
ECLAC subprogrammes and resource requirements, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015


Resources (thousands of United States dollars)
0
5,000
10,000
15,000
Subprogrammes
1. Linkages with the global economy, regional integration and cooperation
2. Production and innovation
3. Macroeconomic policies and growth
4. Financing for development
5. Social development and equality
6. Mainstreaming the gender perspective in regional development
7. Population and development
8. Sustainable development and human settlements
9. Natural resources and infrastructure
10. Planning of public administration
11. Statistics
12. Subregional activities in Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico
13. Subregional activities in the Caribbean
14. Support to regional and subregional integration and cooperation processes and organizations
2010-2011
2012-2013
2014-2015

Source: A/68/6 (Sect. 21), A/66/6 (Sect. 21) and approved budget figures as provided by the Programme Planning and Operations Division of ECLAC.

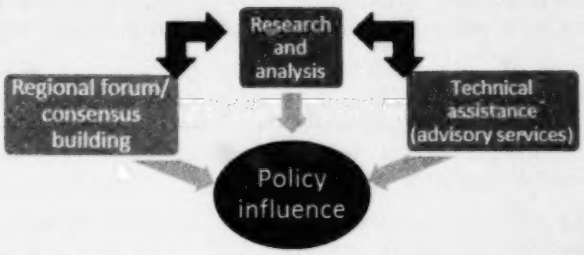
Note: Titles of subprogrammes relate to the biennium 2014-2015 and may not exactly reflect those in the previous bienniums.

Core functions

11. The ECLAC overall mandate is delivered through three closely intertwined core functions: (a) serving as a regional forum and facilitator; (b) providing analysis, research and evidence-based policy alternatives to meet the challenges facing the region; and (c) providing advisory services to facilitate the formulation, adoption and implementation of development policies. Figure II depicts how the

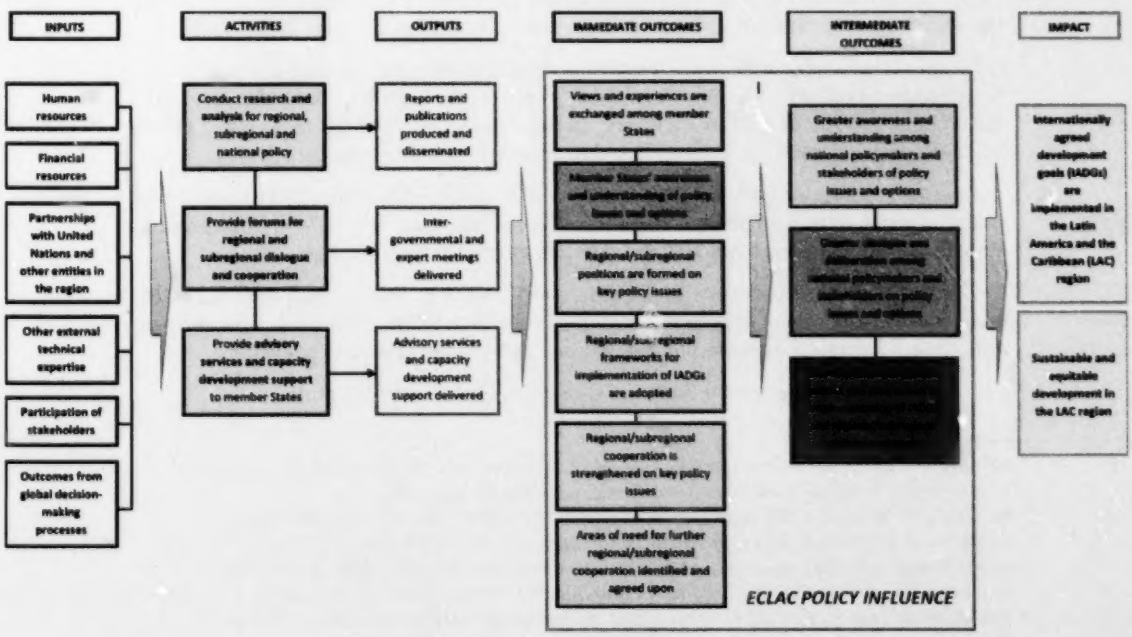
three functional roles are designed to coalesce to influence policies and strategies that advance economic, social and environmentally sustainable development at the regional, subregional and national levels.

Figure II
Functional linkages in support of ECLAC objectives



12. Through these core functions, during the 2012-2013 biennium ECLAC delivered some 250 publications, 88 expert group meetings and 610 advisory missions covering 96 thematic areas. Furthermore, ECLAC implemented 33 field projects and 67 capacity-building courses and provided substantive servicing to the Commission and its nine subsidiary bodies. The "programme impact pathway" (fig. III) illustrates the linkages between the various activities and outputs of ECLAC and their expected outcomes and impact.

Figure III
Programme impact pathway: ECLAC work in support of regional, subregional and national policy


INPUTS
ACTIVITIES
OUTPUTS
IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
IMPACT
Human resources
Financial resources
Partnerships with United Nations and other entities in the region
Other external technical expertise
Participation of stakeholders
Outcomes from global decision-making processes
Conduct research and analysis for regional, subregional and national policy
Provide forums for regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation
Provide advisory services and capacity development support to member States
Reports and publications produced and disseminated
Inter-governmental and expert meetings delivered
Advisory services and capacity development support delivered
Views and experiences are exchanged among member States
Regional/subregional positions are formed on key policy issues
Regional/subregional frameworks for implementation of IADGs are adopted
Regional/subregional cooperation is strengthened on key policy issues
Areas of need for further regional/subregional cooperation identified and agreed upon
Greater awareness and understanding among national policymakers and stakeholders of policy issues and options
Internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) are implemented in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region
Sustainable and equitable development in the LAC region
ECLAC POLICY INFLUENCE

B. Evaluation framework: scope and methodology

Scope

13. The current evaluation assessed the effectiveness of ECLAC and the relevance of its activities towards the achievement of its mandate, with a focus on its influence on regional, subregional and national policy processes. In particular, the evaluation examined how effectively the subprogrammes have delivered the three core functions in support of the achievement of the programme's overall objectives.

14. The scope of the evaluation was determined on the basis of a thorough analysis of the ECLAC mandate and work programme, as well as an extensive consultation with ECLAC management. The team also took into consideration the lessons learned from the recent evaluations of the regional commissions for Africa and for Asia and the Pacific.

15. Data and information reviewed as part of the evaluation were taken primarily from the bienniums 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. Select data and information from earlier years, as well as from 2014, were also reviewed to support the analysis of particular thematic issues.

16. The performance indicators for the expected accomplishments of ECLAC, as set out in its strategic framework (A/67/6/Rev.1, programme 18), were synthesized in the programme impact pathway to frame key questions for the current evaluation exercise.

17. The evaluation also examined how the research and analytical products and lessons learned from technical cooperation work were disseminated by ECLAC and used by regional, subregional and national policymakers.

Methodology

18. The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach for triangulation, including the following quantitative and qualitative data collection methods:

(a) Document and data reviews, including ECLAC strategic frameworks, programme budgets and performance reports and other programme-related documents; reports of past evaluations, audits, inspections and other reviews; media analysis statistics; and national policy documents adopted by member States;

(b) Interviews with ECLAC management and staff; member States, including select representatives of technical/line ministries and members of the Commission; and subregional and national stakeholders engaged in policy work;[2]

(c) Web-based surveys of ECLAC staff; member States, including technical ministries; and other stakeholders, including academia, research institutions, non-governmental/civil society organizations and United Nations entities;[3]

(d) Case studies conducted in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Jamaica.[4]

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[2] Interviews were conducted with 82 ECLAC staff and managers, 69 member States' technical ministry representatives and 20 stakeholders engaged in policy work.

[3] ECLAC staff provided 238 valid responses out of 354 surveys sent out; member States, including technical ministries, provided 189 responses out of 1,266 surveys sent out; and other stakeholders, including academia, research institutions, non-governmental/civil society organizations and United Nations entities, provided 43 responses out of 284 surveys sent out.

[4] For the three case studies, 34 member States' technical ministry representatives and six stakeholders were interviewed.

19. All evaluation results are based on a triangulation of multiple data sources, including document reviews and web-based and interview data.

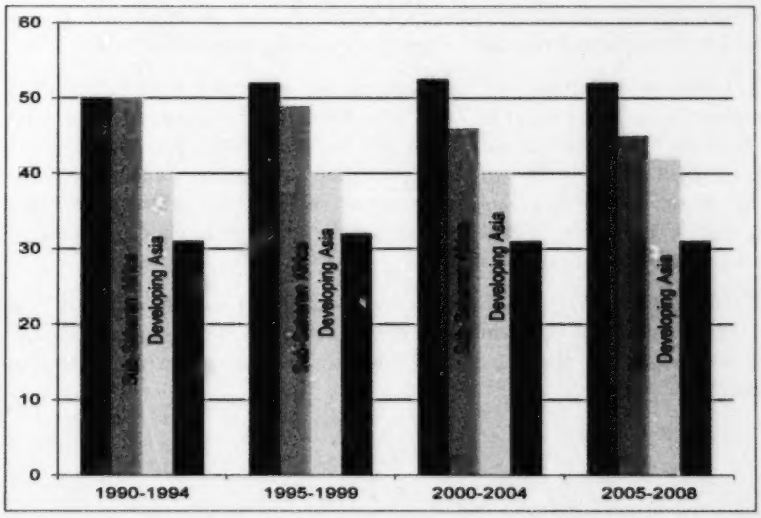
C. Context of ECLAC operations

20. ECLAC responds to the challenges of a region with great diversity. Haiti is the region's only least developed country, while Chile and a handful of Caribbean island countries are high-income economies. In addition, although the remaining majority have middle-income economy status, the countries in this group range from large economic powers, such as Mexico and Brazil, to small island countries with a population smaller than 100,000 such as Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The Caribbean encompasses 23 small island developing States, but the region also has two landlocked countries, namely Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Paraguay. Most South American States and Mexico are large exporters of natural resources, while the vast majority of countries in the Caribbean and Central America depend heavily on imported natural commodities.

21. Spanish is a common language for 18 member States in Latin America. Portuguese and French are spoken in Brazil and Haiti, respectively, and Dutch in Suriname, while English is the language of the remaining 12 Caribbean member States.

22. Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a decade of relatively strong economic growth until 2009, when the fallout of the global financial and economic crises spread across the region. During the same decade, the region also achieved steady and significant declines in poverty and unemployment. Overall, however, Latin America and the Caribbean remains the most unequal region in the world, as measured by the Gini coefficient of income distribution (see fig. IV).

Figure IV
Income inequality by Gini index by region, 1990-2008



Source: United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, World Income Inequality Database.
Abbreviation: OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

23. The varying physical, economic and social conditions among member States also translate into variations in vulnerability to external shocks. Climate change poses serious risks to the entire region, but particularly to small countries in the Caribbean and Central America, owing to their size, location, population concentration within a limited coastal area and, in some cases, weak institutional capacity to respond to crises.

III. Evaluation results

24. The analysis of the evidence collected in the course of the evaluation produced six results (A-F) that respond to the evaluative criteria of relevance and effectiveness. The report also presents three results (G-I) that relate to organizational strengthening.

Relevance

A. ECLAC has raised important and relevant development policy issues for debate among member States in the region and brings a neutral voice to the discussion

25. Seventy-five per cent of member States and other regional and subregional organizations interviewed cited ECLAC as a relevant and credible source of expertise in a number of technical areas of development. It is also viewed as playing a critical role in catalysing regional discussion on various development issues relevant to its member States, including integration and trade, financing for development, fiscal and tax reforms, social protection, gender equality, national development planning, population, natural resources and infrastructure, statistics and economic impacts of climate change. Furthermore, 85 per cent of technical counterparts interviewed considered that ECLAC analytical products and policy proposals provide a unique and alternative perspective on development issues.

26. Among recent contributions to the regional development agenda, member States acknowledged the key role of ECLAC in introducing the notion of "structural change for equality" as an integrated approach to sustainable development.[5] In addition, 75 per cent of technical officials consulted considered ECLAC to have been successful in identifying and supporting discussions about emerging development issues important to the region, such as the governance of natural resources or the economics of climate change.

27. ECLAC supports dialogue and debate by producing research, analysis and policy recommendations that are founded on the experiences of the region. ECLAC analysis and policy advice are considered "politically neutral" with respect to domestic matters.

[5] See resolution 690 (XXXV).

B. Relevance and visibility of ECLAC are significantly higher in Latin America than in the Caribbean

Relevance and visibility of ECLAC in South and Central America are solid

28. ECLAC enjoys strong credibility and visibility among member States, especially in Latin America. A majority of officials responding to the technical ministry survey considered ECLAC to be effective at identifying emerging development policy issues important to the Latin America and Caribbean region (75 per cent) and providing forums for dialogue and deliberation on key development policy issues in the region (66 per cent). Officials and other stakeholders consulted through interviews also recognized its historical and continued role in producing credible research and analysis and in providing forums for debate on policy options.

29. Feedback received from various government officials suggests that ECLAC efforts to remain abreast of both policy and technical issues in various thematic areas have been essential to its reputation as a credible partner in South America and in some parts of Central America. This is particularly evident in member States' engagement and participation in the work of the subsidiary bodies and various other regional conferences organized by ECLAC.

30. The records of member States' participation in the meetings of thematic subsidiary bodies, as shown in table 2, indicate a notable improvement in the representation of both Caribbean and Central American member States at the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Regional Conference on Population and Development. The Regional Conference on Women has also maintained a high level of participation from across the region. Conversely, there was a very low level of participation by English-speaking Caribbean member States in the remaining two bodies. This raises concerns regarding the visibility and relevance of ECLAC in this region on the thematic areas of national planning and science, innovation and information and communications technology.

Table 2
Participation in meetings of thematic subsidiary bodies

Subsidiary body	*South America (10 member States)*	*Central America (7 member States)*	*Spanish-/French-speaking Caribbean (3 member States)*	*English-speaking Caribbean (13 member States)*[a]	*Total*
Statistical Conference of the Americas					
Seventh meeting (Santiago, November 2013)	10	6	2	10	28
Sixth meeting (Bávaro, Dominican Republic, November 2011)	10	4	3	7	24
Fifth meeting (Bogota, August 2009)	8	[redacted]	2	[redacted]	[redacted]
Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean					
Twelfth session (Santo Domingo, October 2013)	10	6	2	9	27
Eleventh session (Brasilia, July 2010)	9	5	3	7	24
Tenth session (Quito, August 2007)	10	5	3	9	27
Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean[b]					
First session (Montevideo, August 2013)	10	7	3	10	30
Ad hoc meeting (Quito, July 2012)	10	6	2	[redacted]	24

Subsidiary body	South America (10 member States)	Central America (7 member States)	Spanish-/French-speaking Caribbean (3 member States)	English-speaking Caribbean (13 member States)[a]	Total
Ad hoc meeting (Santiago, May 2010)	7		2		
Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning[c]					
Fourteenth meeting (Brasilia, November 2013)	5	7			19
Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies					
First session (Santiago, June 2014)	9	5			

Note: Green: 80 per cent or more of member States; yellow: 50-79 per cent; red: less than 50 per cent.

[a] Includes Suriname.

[b] Formerly Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development.

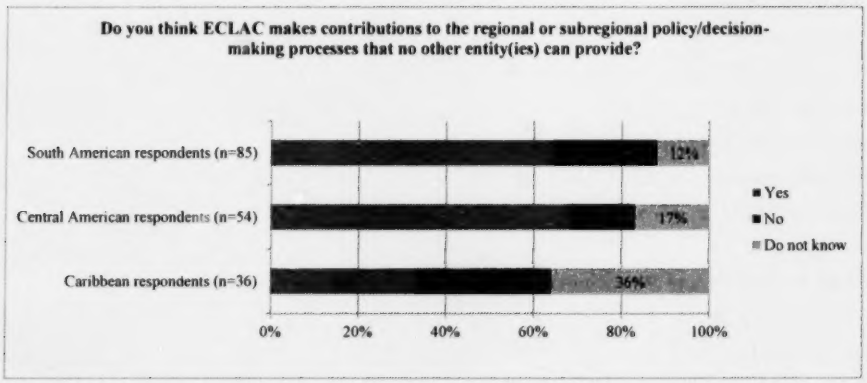
[c] The report of the thirteenth meeting, held in Brasilia in June 2007, was not available on the ECLAC website.

Engagement with technical ministries varies across subregions

31. Some Caribbean and Central American member States' technical ministries have not been included in regular communications from ECLAC related to its work in their respective thematic areas. This is more frequent in areas for which no thematic subsidiary body exists. Awareness of ECLAC work, particularly that of headquarters divisions, is low among technical ministries throughout the Caribbean. The results of the technical ministry survey also suggest that the relevance and visibility of ECLAC are significantly higher in Latin America than in the Caribbean. As shown in figure V, only 33 per cent of Caribbean respondents thought that ECLAC made contributions to the regional or subregional policymaking/decision-making processes that no other entities could provide. Additionally, only 36 per cent of all responding technical ministry officials thought that ECLAC was effective at identifying emerging development policy issues important to the Caribbean, compared with 61 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively, for issues important to the South and Central American subregions. Low visibility stems largely from a lack of regular communications between ECLAC and national policymakers, which is seen as a key area for improvement by both ECLAC managers and member States.

Figure V

Technical ministry officials' perceptions regarding distinctive contributions of ECLAC to regional/subregional decision-making processes by subregion



32. ECLAC substantive divisions have mixed experiences in maintaining an effective liaison relationship with officials in relevant technical ministries throughout the region. The Division for Gender Affairs provides a notable positive exception. Most divisions/offices have no updated database to consolidate the contacts maintained by individual staff, which results in the loss of contacts with staff turnover. In some instances, a change of government led to an abrupt halt to engagement. Currently, there is no organization-wide strategy in place to establish connections with technical ministry officials to inform them of past, ongoing and planned ECLAC work. Fifty-five percent of technical ministry officials surveyed suggested that ECLAC improve its engagement with member States to better meet their needs.

Despite improvement in recent years, there is still a need to improve mainstreaming of Caribbean priorities into the ECLAC programme of work

33. There is wide acknowledgement among Caribbean member States of a recent and significant improvement in the integration of their priorities into ECLAC work. Senior officials from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Jamaica, the current Chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, commended ECLAC leadership for the increased reflection of Caribbean data and priorities in publications and other analytical work.

34. In recent years, several headquarters divisions and sections/units have made conscious efforts to integrate the English-speaking Caribbean into their work programmes. This resulted in immediate improvements to the coordination of the collection of data from those countries. It also led to inter-subregional work, including more participation of Caribbean member States in activities led by both ECLAC headquarters and the subregional headquarters for Central America.

35. At the same time, further efforts are clearly needed to fully integrate the subregion into the ECLAC programme of work. In addition, Caribbean countries continue to face challenges in gaining access to much of the regional knowledge generated by ECLAC, as many technical publications are available only in Spanish.

36. There is currently no mechanism to ensure that the work programmes of the headquarters divisions incorporate the priorities and needs of Caribbean member States identified through the framework of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, including the priorities identified at the Caribbean Development Round Table. The responsibility for the implementation of decisions of the Committee, including mobilizing resources for implementation, is left largely with the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Supporting the implementation of those decisions in various thematic areas, however, is clearly beyond the current capacity of that subregional headquarters. The office has four thematic units: economic development; statistics; social development, including population; and sustainable development. Each thematic unit has between one (statistics) and four (economic development) Professional posts. A total of 10 Professional staff currently conduct research and analysis, support intergovernmental processes and provide technical assistance to respond to subregional needs in diverse areas.

37. Moreover, available data on technical assistance missions during the biennium 2012-2013 indicate that most headquarters divisions carried out a very limited number of advisory missions to English-speaking Caribbean countries. For example, the Population Division carried out 218 missions, of which only 2 were in the English-speaking Caribbean, compared with 123 in South America, 44 in Central America and 7 in Spanish- or French-speaking Caribbean States. The International

Trade and Integration Division and the Division of Production, Productivity and Management did not carry out any technical cooperation missions to the English-speaking Caribbean. Despite the recent targeted efforts of senior management, there seems to be a general tendency not to prioritize the Caribbean.

38. Addressing the pressing needs of the Caribbean would require defining the role and responsibilities of headquarters divisions (both substantive divisions and programme support) to support the implementation of decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee.

Effectiveness

C. ECLAC has facilitated regional and subregional decision-making and consensus building on important thematic areas

39. Two thirds of the technical ministries surveyed indicated that ECLAC was effective in facilitating regional and subregional forums for dialogue and deliberation in support of decision-making and consensus building on key regional policy issues. Member States consider ECLAC to be a partner with highly technical knowledge, an honest broker and a credible resource in supporting regional decision-making. At the three most recent sessions, the Commission arrived at a consensus on 45 items through the adoption of resolutions on a range of thematic areas, such as women, population, information and communications technology, South-South cooperation and social development (table 3). The resolutions facilitated by ECLAC are categorized into three groups:

(a) Management or administrative (e.g. ECLAC work programme): 12 resolutions;

(b) Thematic (e.g. women, population, information society): 25 resolutions, in which ECLAC facilitated regional consensus and the endorsement of a number of measures, including resolution 682 (XXXV), adopted in 2014, by which the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was established;

(c) Overall consensus and political declarations: 8 resolutions.

40. Those 45 resolutions included a total of 59 paragraphs calling for action on the part of the secretariat or the Executive Secretary and 15 calling for action on the part of member States (table 3).

Table 3
Number of resolutions adopted by the Commission by subject/issue, 2010-2014

Subject issue	*2010*	*2012*	*2014*	*Total*
Consensus building/political declarations	1	5	2	8
Thematic nature	7	8	10	25
Administrative	4	4	4	12
Total	**12**	**17**	**16**	**45**
Number of paragraphs calling for secretariat action	14	25	20	59
Number of paragraphs calling for member States' action	3	4	8	15

41. ECLAC also facilitated the adoption of a number of norm-setting agreements and decisions that represent member States' commitments at meetings of the subsidiary bodies.[6] They include the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, in August 2013, and the Santo Domingo Consensus, in August 2007. Some of the most important agreements reached are reflected in table 4.

Table 4
Examples of consensus documents adopted by subsidiary bodies of ECLAC

Population issues
Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development, adopted in Mexico City in May 1993
Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, adopted in August 2013
Gender issues
Quito Consensus, adopted at the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in August 2007
Brasilia Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference, held in July 2010
Santo Domingo Consensus, adopted at the twelfth session of the Regional Conference, held in October 2013

ECLAC played a critical role in assisting member States in developing and articulating a common voice in global policymaking processes

42. Through its provision of analysis and promotion of dialogue, ECLAC assisted member States in developing and articulating a unified voice in global policymaking processes. Notably, ECLAC facilitated the process to reach a common regional position in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in June 2012, the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in September 2014, and the ongoing deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda.

ECLAC has supported regional and subregional integration processes

43. ECLAC provided technical inputs to various subregional integration mechanisms, such as the European Union-Latin America and Caribbean summits, the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, and the Summit of the Americas, as well as to high-level meetings of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). ECLAC, in conjunction with the Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, also provided substantive support to the Ibero-American General Secretariat.

[6] The Santo Domingo Consensus and the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development involve more than 100 and 130 decisions, respectively, that express member States' commitments on a number of areas, including gender equality, gender mainstreaming and political participation of women, indigenous people, and migration.

44. In addition, through the delivery of technical analysis and in response to specific requests for assistance, ECLAC has facilitated deliberation and discussion on a number of development issues through the following regional and subregional integration mechanisms and organizations:

- UNASUR
- South American Infrastructure and Planning Council (COSIPLAN)
- CARICOM
- Central American Integration System (SICA)
- Central American Economic Integration Secretariat (SIECA)
- Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)
- Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)
- CELAC
- Central American Social Integration Secretariat (SISCA)
- Central American Monetary Council
- Andean Community (CAN)

45. Regional and subregional stakeholders interviewed refer to ECLAC as a key technical partner whose inputs have helped them to make informed decisions and to adopt measures to advance regional and subregional integration.

D. ECLAC research and analytical work has, overall, contributed to increasing awareness and sharing of experiences, but not all knowledge has been disseminated as effectively as it could be

ECLAC has increased the knowledge and capabilities of policymakers and informed decision-making processes at the national level

46. ECLAC offers reliable and comparable data and statistics, independent applied research and analysis, and policy options in pursuit of two cross-cutting outcomes: (a) to increase awareness and understanding among policymakers and other stakeholders in the region of current and emerging issues; and (b) to strengthen the capacity of countries in the region to formulate and implement policies that promote sustainable development. Table 5 summarizes the volume of ECLAC research and analytical outputs from the two most recent bienniums.

Table 5
Research and analytical outputs by type, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015

Output type	*2012-2013*	*2014-2015*
Documentation for expert group meetings	88	90
Recurrent publications	74	60
Non-recurrent publications	183	176
Other analytical outputs	181	159
Total research and analysis outputs	**526**	**485**
Percentage share of total ECLAC outputs	69	72
Total ECLAC outputs	**765**	**622**

47. ECLAC research and analysis work is used regularly by a large majority of government officials and stakeholders consulted during the evaluation. It serves as one of their main sources of information to understand regional or subregional trends and to assess the status of their country in relation to other countries in the region. The majority of technical ministry survey respondents recognize the role of ECLAC in facilitating the sharing of experiences among member States, and a large majority of those (83 per cent) who accessed ECLAC research or analytical products considered ECLAC to have been effective at informing regional and/or subregional policy and decision-making processes. Technical ministry officials interviewed also considered ECLAC publications and other knowledge products to be of good quality and a credible source of policy ideas.

48. About two thirds of government officials consulted during the evaluation noted that various ECLAC knowledge products had increased their awareness of issues that were of significant relevance to their countries. Sixty-one percent of officials consulted also indicated having used ECLAC products as references in developing national policies and programmes, many citing examples of such influence. Table 6 includes some of the testimonials from government officials on select ECLAC flagship publications.

Table 6
Select testimonials on use of ECLAC flagship publications

Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean: "The publication provided data and the analysis to assess the status of the country and provided comparative analysis on where we could go."
Social Panorama of Latin America: "Publications such as the *Social Panorama of Latin America* assisted in developing the national care system."
Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean: "[The conclusions of the report] analysing performance of the economies of Latin America with a warning on reprimarization production of certain countries … were useful to analyse the situation of the Ecuadorian economy, its characteristics and its level of dependence on few assets focused on the primary production sector."

Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean: "The study of *Foreign Direct Investment* ... helped to identify the characteristics of investment in Latin America and its contribution to growth, profitability, job creation, technology transfer and dependence on natural resources."

ECLAC has not fully ensured that knowledge reaches policymakers and other audiences who would benefit from it

49. ECLAC research and analytical products are generally valued by policymakers and other stakeholders who have accessed them. At the same time, data from technical ministry officials interviewed suggest that the majority of ECLAC divisions have not effectively disseminated or promoted many of their outputs to relevant national policymakers and broader audiences throughout the region. ECLAC managers widely acknowledged that the dissemination of the results of their work was a key challenge both at the division level and for ECLAC as a whole. Dissemination and promotion are not considered a priority, and few resources are allocated. In fact, with the exception of the flagship publications, the non-post budget for publications does not include any allocation for dissemination. While the primary objective of the publications is to inform and influence member States' policies and programmes, in the absence of any dissemination strategy or activities, the production of a publication appears to be the end result. Without effective dissemination plans, much of the knowledge with regional or subregional applicability has not reached those who could benefit from it.

ECLAC efforts at broader dissemination need improvement

50. In recent years, ECLAC has used a mix of traditional and new social media to increase its profile, particularly for its flagship publications. In addition, ECLAC has implemented various knowledge management initiatives, including the launch in May 2014 of a digital repository that provides one-stop access to all of its publications. In addition, the ECLAC website recently received a significant makeover. The Public Information Unit reported registering roughly 10,000 clippings in primarily Spanish newspapers, television and radio that mention ECLAC every year. Table 7 reflects the numbers of ECLAC Twitter and Facebook followers compared with those of other regional organizations, and table 8 shows the media impacts of select recent flagship publications.

Table 7
Comparison of social media profiles

Organization	*Twitter followers*	*Facebook followers*
ECLAC	144 446	155 449
Inter-American Development Bank	238 078	169 270
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	31 993	6 684
World Bank (Latin American region)	192 964	349 123

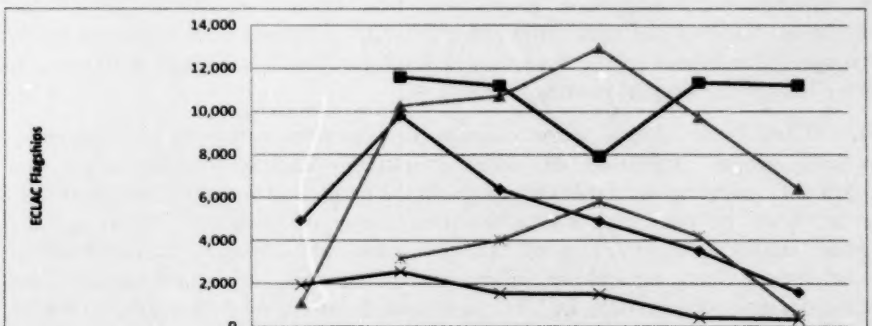
Table 8
Average comparison of data downloads and news media references

Publication	Utilization			
	Web metrics — average annual downloads[a]	*References in news*[b]	*Number of countries with news references*	*Social media/ Facebook follow-up*
Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean	10 650	1 073	36	–
Social Panorama of Latin America	5 189	792	36	8 724
Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean	8 525	1 575	41	4 422
Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy	1 143	472	28	5 850
Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean	2 962	805	43	–

[a] Data reflect the average download figures for each publication from 2009 to 2014, with the exception of *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean*, for which data are available from 2010 only.
[b] News media only (Factiva and LexisNexis) from 1 August 2012 to 2 August 2013.

51. Such recent efforts may have raised the media profile of ECLAC; however, there is no clear evidence that they have reached the intended primary beneficiaries of ECLAC work, namely policymakers engaged in various areas of economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. Data provided by ECLAC indicate that downloads for the majority of its flagship publications have been steadily decreasing, as shown in figure VI.[7] Only the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean* has maintained a similar level of downloads in the past few years.

Figure VI
Flagship download data



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Social Panorama	4,929	9,810	6,380	4,896	3,518	1,601
Preliminary Overview		11,600	11,197	7,904	11,338	11,211
Economic Survey	1,111	10,265	10,701	12,935	9,728	6,414
PANINSAL	1,954	2,561	1,562	1,520	433	351
Foreign Direct Investment		3,187	4,026	5,807	4,204	552

Source: ECLAC analyses and reports.

[7] This analysis relied on the reports of download statistics, which were provided by ECLAC as an input to the evaluation. It should be noted that OIOS was informed by ECLAC of the inconsistency and gaps in data collection across reporting years after the draft evaluation report was prepared.

52. Ensuring that knowledge products reach policymakers, as well as broader audiences, will require a review of the current dissemination channels. ECLAC distributes its knowledge outputs at various forums and meetings and through advisory missions, but the effectiveness of such practices in reaching out to relevant policymakers and, ultimately, achieving policy influence has not yet been assessed. In the meantime, there are some existing good practices within ECLAC that may be considered for replication, most notably the online observatories on fiscal policy and gender equality.

E. ECLAC has supported the strengthening and harmonization of statistics across the region; however, it has not been effective enough in enhancing statistical capacity in the Caribbean, which has been identified as a priority

ECLAC has supported the strengthening of statistical capacity in the region

53. ECLAC has supported the harmonization of statistics across the region and the improvement of methodologies in relation to national accounts, poverty, gender and other social indicators. This has strengthened statistics at the regional, subregional and national levels. ECLAC also helped to improve member States' capacity to collect and analyse census data. During the past two bienniums, ECLAC assisted three countries in improving domestic measures of poverty and labour indicators, provided methodological support on various social indicators to seven countries, and supported five countries with household surveys. With respect to the methodologies on national accounts, 10 countries reported having made a significant improvement, and 4 registered advances in the estimates of satellite accounts. ECLAC also provided comprehensive support to 39 member States and associate members (17 in Latin America and 22 in the Caribbean) participating in the International Comparison Programme with regard to data collection and validation. National statistics offices interviewed highlighted the pivotal role of the Statistical Conference of the Americas in leading regional statistical development, as well as critical support provided by ECLAC.

54. ECLAC also supported the capacity development initiatives undertaken by working groups composed of national statistics offices. Formed under the Conference structure, they include groups on the harmonization of poverty statistics, census work, national accounts, information and communications technology, the labour market, the environment, gender, household surveys, the Millennium Development Goals, agriculture, infants and adolescence, institution-building, and public security and justice. ECLAC continued to strengthen its central statistics database, which, by the end of 2013, had cumulatively recorded more than 6,470,000, downloads of statistical indicators and 1,180,000 downloads of the flagship publication *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

Support to statistical capacity in the Caribbean needs further strengthening

55. OIOS observed some progress in ensuring that Caribbean data and analysis are incorporated into the ECLAC's flagship publications. There has also been increased participation by English-speaking Caribbean member States in the main meetings and other activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, in its resolution 78 (XXIV), recognized

this positive trend and invited the Caribbean countries to increase their participation in the activities of the Conference.[8] However, improving Caribbean data availability and quality will need to remain a key priority for technical assistance. In the area of social statistics, among more than 40 technical advisory missions to 15 member States in 2012-2013, only 1 was conducted in the English-speaking Caribbean. Similarly, the Population Division undertook more than 40 technical advisory missions related to census and/or the statistical software for the retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer (REDATAM) in 2012-2013. More than two thirds of those missions served nine countries in South America, while 17 per cent served countries outside the region. The remaining missions served two Central American, two Spanish-speaking and one English-speaking Caribbean countries.

56. In addition, Caribbean subregional headquarters human resources for supporting statistical work do not adequately reflect the high demand for assistance in the subregion: the office currently has only two posts for the area, with the only Professional (P-4) post having been vacant since February 2013. ECLAC should therefore strengthen statistical support to the Caribbean.

F. ECLAC can further enhance the impact of its technical assistance by fully leveraging its catalytic role

ECLAC has influenced policy/decision-making at the national level

57. ECLAC effectively responded to requests from member States for technical assistance. Document reviews and interviews with national policymakers and other stakeholders in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay corroborated that ECLAC work in bilateral technical assistance is highly appreciated by recipients and has achieved some tangible influence on national policy processes. Its technical assistance work aims to achieve policy influence by providing policy advice without imposing prescriptive actions on member States. The evaluation team sought concrete evidence of national policy influence in a number of thematic areas in the form of a national development strategy, policy or law with tangible linkages to ECLAC work. Table 9 shows some of the examples of the contributions of ECLAC to policy influence, which the evaluation team was able to validate.

Table 9
Examples of ECLAC policy influence

Country	*Thematic area*
Argentina	Industry plan, productive chains
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Energy, census methodology
Chile	Census methodology, social protection
Costa Rica	Agriculture, social protection

[8] Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee resolution 78 (XXIV), para. 3. In the same resolution, the Committee urged ECLAC to "afford high priority to the mobilization of resources necessary for the provision of technical assistance to member countries" through various capacity development activities.

Country	*Thematic area*
Ecuador	National development plan, trade and integration, gender, productive matrix
El Salvador	Social development and protection
Guatemala	Competitiveness, national development plan
Mexico	Fiscal reform, competitiveness
Uruguay	Social protection, gender

58. In addition, 86 (52 per cent) technical ministry survey respondents provided a broad range of examples in which ECLAC activities had influenced the formulation of national policies, strategies and/or action plans in their Governments, including on social policy, gender, economic development, fiscal reforms, population issues, climate change, energy and statistics.

59. However, a review of past and ongoing ECLAC technical assistance projects suggests that country-level technical assistance work is implemented unevenly across the region. A handful of member States (5) have received about 43 per cent of the technical assistance provided. At the same time, almost all managers have noted that technical assistance work demands the commitment of substantial resources, which are not available to fully meet all the demands of the region.

60. There is strong support for an enhanced ECLAC role in catalysing South-South and/or triangular cooperation among member States. To date, ECLAC has leveraged its own limited technical assistance resources by facilitating bilateral technical cooperation between member States in several areas, most notably statistics and national planning, connecting, for example, Brazil, Chile and Mexico to member States with less developed capacities. ECLAC should consider further strengthening its role in promoting cooperation within and between subregions.

61. ECLAC expert group meetings also provided regional policymakers with opportunities to connect and share experiences, which was highly appreciated by technical ministry officials.

Organizational issues

G. Increasing complexity of the development issues faced by the region and growing demand for the work of ECLAC are broadening its mandates and putting enormous pressure on its organizational structure and resources

62. The increasing complexity of regional development challenges has broadened the scope of demand for ECLAC services and activities. Its programme of work is currently divided into 14 subprogrammes, implemented by 11 headquarters substantive divisions, two subregional headquarters and the Office of the Executive Secretary. Together, they deal with more than 60 topics or sub-themes. Table 10 presents the major topics covered by ECLAC work during the two most recent bienniums.

Table 10
Major topics/sub-themes covered by ECLAC work

Thematic pillars	*Topics/sub-themes*
Economic development	Trade, integration, commerce, value chains, productivity, small and medium enterprises, industrial policy, competitiveness, agriculture, information and communications technology, telecommunications, innovation, macroeconomics, labour market, employment, external shocks, fiscal policies, tax reforms, financing for development, pension funds
Social development	Social protection, social development, youth, inequality, gender mainstreaming, aging, population censuses, indigenous peoples, afro descendants
Sustainable development	Economics of climate change, Principle 10 of the Rio Principles, human settlements, urban cities, mining, water, infrastructure, cross-border facilitation, natural resources
Cross-cutting issues, training and statistics	National development planning, subnational and local planning, results-based management, accountability and planning, economic statistics, social statistics, environmental statistics, Millennium Development Goals, national accounts, support to regional/subregional integration processes
Activities with a subregional focus — Central America	Competitiveness, economics and other impacts of climate change, energy, social protection, social development, fiscal and tax reforms, energy efficiency, economic development, sustainable development
Activities with a subregional focus — the Caribbean	Economic development, social development, integration, statistics, gender equality and women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming, disability, trade, energy efficiency and renewable energy, disaster risk management, information and communications technology, migration and development, issues related to small island developing States

63. Every year there are requests for technical assistance in new thematic areas. Governance of natural resources and mechanisms to measure, monitor and evaluate the progress of the newly proposed sustainable development goals are among the recently added themes. ECLAC also continues to receive additional mandates from the Commission. In 2012, the Commission agreed to create a new subprogramme, Support to regional and subregional integration and cooperation processes and organizations. In addition, the Conferences on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies and on Social Development have been created, with a need for support from ECLAC. Furthermore, internal initiatives to respond to mandates, such as the adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy, are being implemented.

64. At the same time, the overall resource base of ECLAC is shrinking. Its regular budget resources decreased from $123.3 million in the biennium 2012-2013 to $115.9 million in 2014-2015 (table 1). Its extrabudgetary resources also decreased between the two bienniums, from $32.1 million to $31.5 million. Together, the figures represent a total reduction of about $8 million, or 5 per cent.

65. The growing demand for ECLAC work has, over the years, put enormous pressure on its existing organizational structure and available resources, creating unwieldy structures in some areas. Staff members, sometimes junior, are often made solely responsible for a broad thematic area for the entire region. In a number of cases, ECLAC engagement in a certain area was halted as a result of the departure of a single staff member. There is a general sense among managers and staff that available resources may be stretched too thin. Government officials and stakeholders consulted also highlighted the lack of continuity of ECLAC involvement in various national policy issues, which negatively affected its ability to maintain an effective relationship with member States.

66. The sustainable development goals process provides an opportune time for ECLAC to more effectively identify synergies in its programme structure and better design its strategies to respond to the thematic priorities that correspond to the changing mandates, reconciling the need for relevance and effectiveness with the reality of resource constraints.

H. While monitoring and reporting routines are followed, practices for collecting and using outcome data are inconsistent

67. ECLAC subprogrammes are in compliance with the Secretariat-wide requirements for the monitoring and reporting of output delivery and other programme performance indicators. Records for the biennium 2013-2014 maintained in the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System show that, at the end of 2014, ECLAC had submitted performance data for 86 per cent of the indicators and 97 per cent of the expected accomplishments, compared with Secretariat-wide average figures of 59 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. Nevertheless, practices are inconsistent among divisions in measuring, collecting and recording evidence of outcome delivery. Some divisions, for example, use pre-and post-participation surveys to assess the effectiveness or impact of capacity-building activities or technical advisory services. Others rely only on the spontaneous feedback received from the beneficiaries. For the research and analysis work, the practice of undertaking online readership surveys was not consistently implemented for all the flagship publications, and the Programme Planning and Operations Division had earlier stopped producing the analysis of the results for use by relevant divisions. No organizational mechanism is currently in place to systematically collect feedback on the utility of publications or assess the influence achieved.

68. A review of programme documents also suggests that available performance data are currently not fully utilized. The reports on programme performance presented to the Commission are focused largely on activities, making only sporadic references to outcome performance indicators, such as enhancement of capacities of national Governments or influence on national policy processes.

I. ECLAC evaluation work has been limited in scope of coverage

69. In recent years, ECLAC has undertaken various initiatives to strengthen its evaluation function, including an evaluation policy introduced in October 2013. The coverage and impact of its evaluation work remain insufficient, however: while some 11 evaluations were carried out in the past five years, only two were done at the subprogramme level. Four evaluations related to bilateral cooperation programmes funded through extrabudgetary resources (Germany, Spain and Sweden), and the remaining five concerned Development Account projects. While some of those evaluations also involved the assessment of thematic and cross-cutting topics, there appears to be a need for ECLAC to further strengthen its evaluation function so as to ensure that its relevance and effectiveness are periodically evaluated in all areas of work and lessons are applied in compliance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

70. There are several areas of particular concern that may warrant further review. First, there is no clear mechanism to determine priority among evaluation topics, for example based on strategic importance, risk levels and/or periodicity. Second, follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations is still insufficient. Finally, there is concern about the evaluation capacities, the level of resources dedicated to the evaluation function and its reporting line.

IV. Conclusions

71. ECLAC continues to enjoy a solid reputation and high credibility in Latin America, generating knowledge and serving as a catalyst and an honest broker to regional discussion on development issues that are important and relevant to the region. These include contributions to regional agenda setting and the recent debate on dimensions of inequality. At the same time, the improvements notwithstanding, more attention needs to be provided to the Caribbean in general, especially in the area of statistics.

72. ECLAC has played a critical role in facilitating regional dialogue and advocating action in a number of areas, including gender, statistics, population and development, information and communications technology and national development planning. It has been effective at influencing regional and subregional decision-making. In terms of engagement at the national level, ECLAC can further leverage its role by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experiences and promoting cooperation between individual member States, as well as within and between subregions.

73. At the organizational level, more demands are continually and cumulatively being made on ECLAC without any commensurate increase in resources. In order to retain its comparative advantages, ECLAC needs to assess its strategies and structure, given its current mandates, in the context of the realities and challenges identified in the evaluation. To further enhance its relevance and effectiveness, ECLAC also needs to harmonize monitoring mechanisms and practices and strengthen the coverage and reporting lines of the evaluation function.

V. Recommendations

74. OIOS makes six important recommendations:

Recommendation 1. ECLAC should, within its mandates, assess its strategies and structure in order to achieve greater convergence between its thematic areas of work and its three core functions and to ensure the effective use of its available resources.

Indicator of achievement: Document reviewing the strategies and structure used in the preparation of the budget

Recommendation 2. ECLAC should develop and implement an engagement strategy vis-à-vis national policymakers in technical ministries throughout the region. Such a strategy should include: (a) regular dissemination of information about the work of ECLAC; and (b) annual consultations with Governments (both central agencies and technical ministries), jointly undertaken by headquarters divisions and subregional headquarters, to brief them on relevant planned, ongoing and completed work and to discuss the country's needs and priorities.

Indicator of achievement: approved and implemented engagement strategy

Recommendation 3. ECLAC should put in place a formal mechanism to ensure that the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee are incorporated into the work programmes of all the relevant headquarters substantive divisions.

Indicator of achievement: guidance note to divisions formulated

Recommendation 4. ECLAC should improve the effectiveness of its knowledge dissemination by developing an outreach strategy that guides the issuance of every knowledge product (publication) that it delivers. Such a strategy should include an action plan, a budget and measures for the monitoring of the output's utility.

Indicator of achievement: approved outreach strategy

Recommendation 5. ECLAC should strengthen its performance monitoring mechanisms and ensure the consistency of data collection methods and tools used by divisions to support result assessments. Collected performance data, as well as identified lessons learned, should be discussed at the strategic planning and monitoring meetings.

Indicator of achievement: updated and approved guidelines for monitoring and evaluation

Recommendation 6. ECLAC should strengthen its evaluation function by establishing a separate evaluation unit with the necessary competencies and resources; identifying and undertaking periodic, risk-based evaluations across the subprogrammes; and following up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations to promote accountability.

Indicator of achievement: revised and approved terms of reference of the evaluation unit

Annex

Executive Secretary's comments on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean[a]

11 March 2015

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) would like to thank the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the opportunity to provide comments on the above-referenced report. ECLAC acknowledges the importance of the evaluation and extends its appreciation to OIOS for its collaborative approach throughout the evaluation process.

ECLAC appreciates that the report recognizes some of the key strengths and challenges faced by the institution. Among its key strengths that the report mentions is the fact that ECLAC has raised important and relevant development policy issues for debate among member States while maintaining its impartiality and facilitating regional and subregional integration initiatives. This, in the context of a region with great diversity, where countries in the region range from high-income to least developed countries and from small islands to landlocked developing States, all of which poses important challenges.

ECLAC has studied the report carefully and welcomes its findings and insights, which will support organizational learning in strengthening the effectiveness of the use of its available resources, the dissemination of its work both to the public in general and to national authorities and policymakers, and the establishment of mechanisms to further improve the inclusion of the Caribbean perspective in the work programme of ECLAC substantive divisions and its reporting and evaluation mechanisms. To this end, ECLAC has prepared a detailed action plan, outlining work that is under way to follow up on the important recommendations in the report.

ECLAC concurs with the recommendations in the report and would like to share its overall perspectives on them below.

Recommendation 1: ECLAC thematic areas are organized and structured under five clusters: social, economic, environmental, statistics and public administration and subregional activities. Under this structure, ECLAC provides technical assistance services to member States upon request, undertakes analytical work to generate specialized knowledge and promotes consensus building through the work of its subsidiary bodies. The relation between ECLAC core functions and thematic areas takes advantage of synergies in the implementation of the ECLAC programme of work between and within clusters. In the context of the continuous improvement approach, ECLAC will continue to explore ways for improving the effectiveness of the use of available resources and search for increasing interrelations in the fulfilment of its core functions among its thematic areas.

Recommendation 2: Being a regional commission, as compared with specialized agencies, funds and programmes, ECLAC has a programme of work with a regional

[a] In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services presents the full text of the comments received from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. This practice has been instituted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

scope, both in geographical terms and in thematic areas of interest for member States. In this context, ECLAC maintains continuous dialogue with government authorities and other stakeholders on the region's development agenda, their needs and priorities with regard to the work of its subsidiary bodies, and the provision of technical cooperation services at the national level. ECLAC regularly disseminates its work and discusses with member States' authorities their changing priorities and needs. Nevertheless, national strategies should be driven primarily by the demands of member States, with full respect for their own agendas and timetable, so as to avoid any misconception of the secretariat's being prescriptive, and respecting countries' particular needs and political circumstances.

Recommendation 3: ECLAC welcomes the suggestion to formalize the current mechanism in place to follow up on the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee adopted by the Commission in plenary meeting. In addition to the formal practice in place of the Committee Chair reporting on the implementation of those decisions biannually to the Commission in plenary meeting, the current mechanism also monitors progress made in the two rounds of strategic planning meetings organized annually by the Programme Planning and Operations Division and conducted by the Office of the Executive Secretary with the technical teams of ECLAC substantive divisions, subregional and national offices and the liaison office. Furthermore, ECLAC will formally report on the implementation of this progress through a dedicated slot in the report of activities of the Commission. ECLAC management will also consider any other measures as necessary in due course.

Recommendation 4: ECLAC will develop an outreach strategy at an aggregate level rather than at the individual output level, which could prove to be unattainable in practical terms. The strategy at the aggregate department level could be flexibly tailored to the specificities of each "knowledge output".

Recommendation 5: ECLAC will place more emphasis on the inclusion of monitoring in the two rounds of strategic planning meetings that are organized annually by the Programme Planning and Operations Division and the Office of the Executive Secretary. ECLAC is already making efforts to improve the results-orientated nature of the reporting methods and instances and will reinforce the support to the existing monitoring and evaluation network.

Recommendation 6: ECLAC is already in the process of reinforcing the evaluation function. All evaluation exercises recently undertaken, independently of their source of financing, have been designed in such a way that the main findings, conclusions and recommendations could be applicable to the ECLAC programme as a whole so as to extract valid lessons learned, as well as good practices. The feasibility of establishing a properly staffed Evaluation Unit with commensurate resources will definitely depend on the future availability of resources requiring the General Assembly's decision. One feasible option is to channel some of the benefit realization efficiency gains from Umoja to that purpose if accepted. ECLAC management will consider discussing a proposal in such terms during the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.